



SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 5

DATE 2/22/13

BILL NO. SB 348

Senate Bill 348, Senator Thomas - Major Themes

The above-referenced groups are all in support of Senate Bill 348, introduced by Senator Fred Thomas. SB 348 will help improve school safety through a number of different changes proposed in the bill. Key elements of the bill include:

1. Adds public schools to the exception for disclosure of building plans for public safety and security.
2. Requires adoption of a school safety plan by July 1, 2014 that must include public input and coordination with law enforcement officials.
3. Adds a more global definition of disaster, for which school districts must plan and conduct drills and allows school boards to determine which disasters are applicable in their community in designing drills.
4. Requires school districts to annually review, and, as deemed necessary, update suspension and expulsion policies related to students with weapons or firearms at schools.
5. Replaces the school facilities grant program after this next biennium with an equitable and locally controlled distribution formula and adds school safety to the list of facilities repairs authorized with these funds.
6. Expands school district access to information in possession of law enforcement regarding criminal activities of students that could impact school safety.
7. Broadens the purpose of the county interdisciplinary child information team to include school safety. The formation of the team would be required under the bill in order further enhance communications and coordination among and break down barriers to information sharing needed among all key governmental entities regarding issues of school safety. The bill also allows the school superintendent who is part of that team to share information about students with others in the school district who need to know such information in order to adequately protect students, subject to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.
8. Provides a one time, 2.5 year spending authority from any school district fund to pay for upgrades to access entry points in public schools for purposes of enhancing school safety in light of recent tragedies. Importantly, the interests of taxpayers are protected by prohibiting a school district that transfers any funds for repairs from a fund supported by a nonvoted levy from increasing its nonvoted levy for the purpose of restoring the funds transferred.